



Testimony of Creative Works

LD 209 An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025

Neither for nor Against

January 23, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Gattine, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of both the Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services Committees.

My name is Matthew Hickey, and I am the Chief Executive Officer for Creative Works.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to this Committee regarding the supplemental budget.

I ask for your support to restore and allocate the funding needed for January 1, 2025, MaineCare service rate cost of living adjustments in the supplemental budget, LD 209 *An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund, and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025*.

Creative Works is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism, and brain injury. Creative Works was founded in 1967 and believes strongly in building communities of inclusion one relationship, one experience, and one person at a time. We provide a range of services, including residential, employment, community support, shared living, and case management, to 507 participants in southern and central Maine. Additionally, Creative Works employs 325 staff members in York, Cumberland, Androscoggin, and Kennebec counties.

I am writing to express my deep concern with the omission of cost of living adjustments for MaineCare Sections 18, 20, 21, and 29 in the supplemental budget. Over the past four years, service providers have faced considerable staffing challenges, with Creative Works



operating with a 10% workforce shortage. This shortage has led to increased overtime as well and additional direct care hours from management staff to ensure service quality.

The cost of living rate increases we received in 2023 and 2024 were allocated to enhance wages, benefits, and bonuses, resulting in a 10% improvement in turnover rates the last two years. Maintaining a strong, well-trained, and supported workforce is crucial for the sustainability of our care system. It is essential employees are paid at least 125% of minimum wage. The previous cost of living rate increases were starting to have a positive effect. Please reconsider and restore the January 1st, COLA for MaineCare rates in the supplemental budget.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew Hickey", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Hickey

Creative Works

Chief Executive Officer